



# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (Red)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

William J. Peeples, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner

STATE OF MARYLAND

2305 N. CHARLES STREET BALTIMORE, MD. 21218 Area Code 301-Phone 837-9000

## Preliminary Report

RECEIVED

MAR 13 1968

CECIL COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.

To: Mr. Howard E. Chaney, Director  
Bureau of Consumer Protection

From: Mr. J. A. Beegan, Head  
Industrial Health Engineering Section

Re: Investigation of Complaint Concerning Odors from Galaxy  
Chemical Company, Providence, Cecil County

On March 5, 1968, Mr. Beegan of the Office of Environmental Health Services assisted personnel of the Cecil County Health Department in the carrying out of an investigation into a complaint by Dr. Pietro Capurro, M.D., concerning noxious odors being emitted by the Galaxy Chemical Company. Dr. Capurro was interviewed in the offices of the County Health Department. Mr. Paul Mraz, President of Galaxy Chemicals Company was interviewed during a tour of his plant. Present during the interviews and the plant tour were Mr. Dave Moore and Mr. Hamilton of the County Health Office and Mr. Tower from Region Six of the Division of Air Quality Control.

The Galaxy Chemical Company is a small type of marginal business which depends for its existence on the processing of waste products produced by others. [Larger companies such as DuPont in Delaware ship their used solvents to Galaxy Chemical for reclamation and recovery.] Apparently these solvents are used in the processing of paints, varnishes and plastic resins. When these solvents are received in sufficient quantity they are cleaned and purified by fractionation and distillation processes from which a type of sludge known as "bottoms" result. These bottoms are the contaminant which has been removed from the purified solvents and according to the company they contain paint and lacquer residues and other polymeric residues such as polystyrene and polyvinyl chloride resins.

The disposal of these wastes to the satisfaction of everybody has been a most difficult problem for Mr. Mraz. The Health Department won't let him burn it because of the Air Pollution problem. The Department of Water Resources won't let him bury it because of the water pollution problem and the county will not permit him to use the county dump. Consequently he is compelled to dump the waste on his own property resulting in atrocious housekeeping conditions and a permanent source of odors which arouses the ire of his neighbors.

000004

Mr. Mraz appears to be perfectly willing to cooperate with any requirements that we might suggest but he feels now, after all these years, that the Health Department is harassing him and he has

ORIGINAL

sought legal advice. Mr. Mraz now states that he will not ~~pay~~ <sup>Reedy</sup> out any requirements of the Health Department nor will he spend any money on improvements which are not guaranteed to solve his problem. However, before Mr. Mraz erected his plant in 1961, Mr. Moore of the County Health Department advised him that he would run into difficulties with odors in this area.

Galaxy Chemical went into operation in 1961 and immediately complaints of odors began to be received by the County Health Department from residents in the vicinity of the plant. On numerous occasions personnel from this office investigated these complaints and proposed solutions in cooperation with the County Health Office. However, little progress has been made so far because the company is in violation of no law.

Subsequent to all this, Dr. Capurro arrived on the scene. He came from a Mid-western State to settle in the area about six months ago. Dr. Capurro, M.D. is a pathologist who has a laboratory in Union Hospital in Elkton. His home is located something less than a mile downwind from the plant. Dr. Capurro has complained bitterly to Mr. Mraz, to the County Health Office, and to others about the distressing odors coming from Galaxy Chemicals. He has gotten a number of his neighbors to sign petitions of complaint against the company.

When wind and weather conditions are right and because of the character of the terrain there is no doubt that residents in the area are periodically and sporadically exposed to noxious vapors from this plant which have distressing effects not only on Dr. Capurro but on his neighbors also. As a result of an episode on February 7, 1968, Dr. Capurro was admitted to Union Hospital at 2 a.m. with a complaint of persistent vomiting due to exposure to noxious odor. Dave Moore interviewed him in the hospital before he was released later in the day.

Butyl alcohol, of which Dr. Capurro complains, is mainly a narcotic and a mucous membrane irritant and does not constitute a serious health hazard. However, it was learned that in 1964 Dr. Capurro became seriously ill because of over exposure to chloroform. It is possible that this episode predisposes him to react violently and to be hyper susceptible to the effects of organic solvent vapors in general.

During the interview with Dr. Capurro he expressed the feeling, quite strongly, that the tax payers' money was not being used to take care of situations such as this. He claims that the County Health Department is not taking any action in this matter. However, Mr. Moore has no solid evidence on which to take the company to court and in fact there is no violation of law. Even the public nuisance law requires that the public health be endangered. Legal action is also open to Dr. Capurro against the company, I believe.

Even though it takes time, I feel that the best alternative is to work with the company as they appear willing to work with us in finding a solution to this problem. In cooperation with the Division of Air Quality Control, the Division of Solid Wastes, the County Health Office and the Department of Water Resources I

000005

ORIGINAL  
(Red)

believe that an effective solution can be found.

Mr. Mraz stated that an average of 5000 pounds per day or ten or twelve tons a week of this waste is produced. Finding a land fill site for the disposal of such amounts might present a difficult problem. Mr. Mraz suggested that burning the material first prior to land fill disposal would reduce the volume to about 6 or 7%. I believe that proper combustion of the material in a properly designed incinerator so that no air pollution problem is created is the first proposal to be investigated.

The investigation will be continued..

J. J. M.

C. H. M.